Cut in Subsidy on Food

125. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to cut the subsidy bill on food by Rs. 2500 crores;

(b) whether there will be a dual price system for below the poverty level (BPL) and above the poverty level (APL) people; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) to (c) The information is being collected from Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution.

Voluntary retirement scheme in Sick Banks

126. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to freeze all future wage increase in banks particularly the so called weak/sick banks;

(b) whether Government also propose to introduce Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) in these banks;

(c) whether Government have taken the views of the Unions in this regard;

(d) whether Government have finalised any time frame for completing this process, if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, what are the obstructions in having such a time schedule?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) There is no such proposal at present.

(b) to (e) As regards the policy on voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) in public sector banks, Regulation 29 of the Bank

(Employees') Pension Regulation, 1995, provides for grant of pensionary benefits to those who voluntarily retire from banks' service on or after 1st November, 1993 after completing 20 years of qualifying service. While Government has not framed a new VRS, views of Chief Executives of public sector banks have been sought on the desirability of introducing in public sector banks a Scheme which is in operation in public sector undertakings, with or without modifications. Since as yet, no firm proposal has been formultated, (c), (d) and (e) do not arise.

Revision of conveyance allowance payable to Central Government Employees

127. SHRI ANIL SHARMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE pleased to state:

(a) whether, in view of the increase in fare in transport services, there is any proposal under Government's consideration for rationalisation and revision of the conveyance allowance in respect of the Central Government employees, particularly in Himachal Pradesh;

(b) if so, by when the proposal would materialise; and

(c) by when the conveyance allowance at the revised rate would be paid to the Central Government employees in Himachal Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (c) Does not arise.

Export House Status to Hotels

128. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plan to bestow Export House status to the hotels; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, The Government have bestowed the service export house status